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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

**Directions:** After reading the essay, follow the steps below.

1. Circle the major claim.
2. Look for source material (quotes and citations) and underline the analysis of the source material.
3. Highlight text that connects sources to the thesis/major claim.
4. Pick two locations where analysis and evidence could be improved upon, put a star ( ★ ) next to those sentences, and write your revisions in the space below.

**Essay prompt:** *Develop an argument that evaluates the extent to which states responded to societal and state collapse after the fall of the Roman Empire and Han Dynasty China up to c. 1200 CE.*

During the height of the Roman Empire and Han Dynasty, trade flourished as goods, spices, and animals moved along the Silk Roads. After the fall of the Han Dynasty in the third century and the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century, the volume of trade declined. The fall of the Roman Empire and Han Dynasty led to a decline in trade along networks of exchange; however, this decline was merely a temporary setback rather than a prolonged reduction of trade.

Political and economic instability in China and the Western Roman Empire following the collapse of these empires led to a decline in both availability of and demand for goods. The decline of trade after the collapse of the Han Dynasty is documented in the letter written by Sogdian merchant Fri-khwataw, who describes conditions in Guzang, a city along the Silk Roads. “From inside China I have heard worse … news day by day … there is no caravan departing from here” (Document 1). ★ After the Han Dynasty fell, roads were less safe for travelers and goods.

While the Silk Road trade networks did decline after the collapse of the Roman Empire and Han Dynasty, trade did not cease to exist. Once the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907) took control of China, trade once again began to increase across networks of exchange. By the early eighth century, trade in the town of Turfan appeared to be increasing. Historian Valerie Hansen writes about merchants selling an enslaved girl and horses along the Silk Roads. While trade appeared to be making a comeback, merchants were required to provide guarantors that the enslaved and horses were not stolen (Document 2). ★ But the fact that they existed at all meant that trade was coming back.

As China transformed from the Tang to Ming dynasties, trade along the Silk Roads continued to flourish. The painting of Buddhist monks, one from East Asia and the other from Central Asia, indicates an agreeable sharing of belief systems between people located hundred of miles away (Document 6). Trade around the Eastern Roman Empire’s capital city of Constantinople continued well into the twelfth century. The Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela wrote of his experiences in Constantinople, describing it as “a busy city, and merchants come to it from every country by sea or land, and there is none like it in the world except Baghdad…” (Document 7). Merchants from a lot of regions met on Constantinople to trade indicating that networks had fully recovered by this time.

The collapse of the Western Roman Empire and Han Dynasty led to a decrease in trade. While it did take a few centuries to recover, trade did not fully go away. New communities like the Tang Dynasty and Eastern Roman Empire emerged and used influence and protection along the Silk Roads to rebuild and expand trade from the seventh through the twelfth centuries.

1. **Revised analysis and evidence 1:**

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| Fri-khwataw describes how merchants loaded with trade goods and travelers were stranded in the city. The political and economic instability in China after the fall of the Han Dynasty led to a decline in the number of caravans traveling along the Silk Roads. No longer could Silk Roads merchants count on the military protection and upkeep of routes that the Han provided. |

1. **Revised analysis and evidence 2:**

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| The requirement of guarantors could indicate that while trade was increasing, the Tang had not been able to fully protect the Silk Roads while they sought to maintain control over China and increase their military. However, merchants appeared to have found ways to trade along networks by requiring these guarantors indicating that trade continued despite the fall of both the Han Dynasty and the Roman Empire. |